

WASHINGTON, DC- In an effort to strengthen the protections for victims of domestic violence, Congresswoman Linda T. Sánchez (CA-39) has co-sponsored the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2005 (VAWA). Originally enacted in 1994, VAWA dramatically improved law enforcement's response to violence against women and increased the services available to victims. In 2000, Congress reauthorized the law adding services for rural, older and immigrant women, as well as women with disabilities. The current VAWA expires in September and Congress must reauthorize it to continue giving protections to victims of domestic violence.

"I am very pleased to be an original cosponsor of such a critical piece of legislation. My Democratic colleague, Rep. Zoe Lofgren (CA-16), has offered a proposal that includes several key provisions that the Republican bill has left out," said Congresswoman Sánchez. "The Democratic proposal strengthens the current law by adding new protections for victims of domestic violence, who are so often silenced by fear," added Sanchez.

The Lofgren proposal includes additional domestic violence prevention programs; economic security provisions; increased protection of battered immigrant women and children; enhanced protection of victims' personal information; required advisory of emergency contraception to rape victims; provisions to prevent attacks by phony police and public officials; an act that would combat human trafficking of young girls and women; and creation of a DNA database of violent predators against women and children.

"It is imperative that Congress reauthorizes VAWA with the strengthened provisions. Today, one in four women is directly affected by domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. I have seen the human face of domestic violence at women's shelters in my district and I know our sisters, mothers, and daughters deserve this comprehensive version of VAWA. I look forward to advancing VAWA in the Judiciary Committee," concluded Sánchez.

The VAWA 2005 was introduced today and was referred to the House Judiciary Committee. As a member of House Judiciary, Congresswoman Sánchez will play a key role in reviewing this legislation in committee.